

Mr. KUCINICH. Madam Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

□ 1145

EXPRESSING SOLIDARITY WITH EL SALVADOR

Mr. ENGEL. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 213) expressing the sense of Congress for and solidarity with the people of El Salvador as they persevere through the aftermath of torrential rains which caused devastating flooding and deadly mudslides, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the concurrent resolution.

The text of the concurrent resolution is as follows:

H. CON. RES. 213

Whereas, on November 9, 2009, parts of El Salvador were decimated by floods brought on by Hurricane Ida;

Whereas Hurricane Ida caused the death of over 190 people in El Salvador, and made over 14,000 homeless, with both of those numbers likely to rise;

Whereas over 1,800 homes have been destroyed by the mudslides;

Whereas the small coffee growing town of Verapaz, population 7,000, has almost been completely destroyed;

Whereas reports have stated that up to 10,000 Salvadorians may need emergency food assistance;

Whereas Hurricane Ida also left about 13,000 people homeless in Nicaragua and damaged about 100 homes in Guatemala;

Whereas neighboring nations of El Salvador have provided relief to the people of El Salvador;

Whereas the United States, through the U.S. Agency for International Development and U.S. Southern Command, has provided significant emergency relief and assistance to the people of El Salvador in the wake of Hurricane Ida; and

Whereas El Salvador has begun the process of recovering from this natural disaster: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That Congress—

(1) expresses solidarity with all people affected by Hurricane Ida;

(2) commends the brave efforts of the people of El Salvador and Central America as they recover from Hurricane Ida;

(3) applauds the coordination between the countries of Central America during the relief effort in providing relief to the people of El Salvador;

(4) acknowledges the efforts of the government of El Salvador to work closely and promptly with the United States to assist the affected population;

(5) recognizes the progress made by El Salvador on disaster preparedness capacity and their efforts to invest in disaster risk reduction; and

(6) urges the President to continue to make available assistance to help mitigate the effects of the recent natural disasters that have devastated El Salvador.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New York (Mr. ENGEL) and the gentle-

woman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ENGEL. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New York?

There was no objection.

Mr. ENGEL. Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of H. Con. Res. 213, a resolution expressing our support for the people of El Salvador as they persevere through the aftermath of floods brought on by Hurricane Ida. I am the chairman of the Western Hemisphere Subcommittee of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, and I feel especially strongly about a resolution like this. I want to thank the ranking member of my subcommittee, CONNIE MACK, the gentleman from Florida, for introducing this important resolution.

On November 9, a large portion of El Salvador was devastated by floods brought on by Hurricane Ida; 196 people were killed, 78 people are missing, and nearly 14,000 individuals are displaced from their homes. Our thoughts are with the people and Government of El Salvador as they cope with these difficult losses.

The United States, through USAID and the U.S. Southern Command, has provided significant emergency relief and assistance to the people of El Salvador in the wake of Hurricane Ida. The President of El Salvador, Mauricio Funes, and his government have worked closely with the United States to assist the affected populations.

Let me add that I attended the inauguration of President Funes in El Salvador with Secretary of State Hillary Clinton just a few months ago, and I am glad that our governments are working so closely together. And let me say that I have great confidence in President Funes as he takes on these crucial disaster relief efforts. I had the pleasure, when I attended the inauguration of Mr. Funes with Secretary Clinton, of meeting with then President-elect Funes at the Summit of the Americas in Trinidad as well, so I have discussed things with him twice.

As I have said, the U.S. and other countries have already done a great deal to assist El Salvador during this difficult time, but I believe much more remains to be done. I urge my colleagues to support this crucial legislation, and I again thank Representative MACK for his important initiative.

I encourage the Obama administration to also support disaster relief efforts in Nicaragua and Guatemala, and we need to continue to assist the government and people of El Salvador and prevent future disasters by investing in the country's infrastructure. And I want to, again, say that Hurricane

Ida's damages were not limited to El Salvador. Guatemala and Nicaragua were impacted as well.

So I want to thank my friend, Congressman MACK, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, I'd like to yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I rise today to join my colleagues in support for the people of El Salvador and, specifically, the bill before us, H. Con. Res. 213, a resolution introduced by my colleague from Florida, my good friend, Mr. CONNIE MACK, the ranking member of our important Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere.

Last month, as we have heard, the torrential rains of Hurricane Ida took a devastating toll on the people of El Salvador. Nearly 200 people lost their lives, and more than 14,000 were left homeless. Up to 10,000 Salvadorans were left in reported need of emergency food supplies. The devastation did not stop at the borders of El Salvador, however. Hurricane Ida also left about 13,000 people homeless in Nicaragua and damaged about 100 homes in Guatemala.

This important resolution expresses our solidarity with all of the people impacted by this horrendous storm, and it commends the brave efforts of all who helped to contribute in the relief efforts in its aftermath. Specifically, I would like to recognize and commend the significant and immediate efforts undertaken by our most generous country, the United States of America, in the wake of this horrific storm. Through the U.S. Agency for International Development's Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance and the U.S. Southern Command, the United States was able to help airlift emergency relief supplies, finance humanitarian assistance projects, support medical evacuations, assess infrastructure repair projects, and deliver emergency and food supplies to the worst-hit and isolated communities in El Salvador.

This resolution also recognizes the coordination among the countries of Central America in the relief efforts following the storm. It is critical that responsible nations continue to work together to better prepare ourselves and our democratic partners for natural disasters such as this one.

Again, I would like to commend the brave efforts of the people of El Salvador and, in fact, all of Central America as they recover from Hurricane Ida and to express our strong support during this most difficult time.

Specifically, I would like to congratulate my friend from Florida (Mr. MACK) for his authorship of this important resolution, and I would like to recognize him at this time, Madam Speaker, to speak on this resolution. And I would ask him if he would also speak on the Drug Commission on the Western Hemisphere of which he and Mr. ENGEL were the authors.

At this time, Madam Speaker, I would like to yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MACK), the ranking member of the Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere and the author of this measure.

Mr. MACK. Thank you to Chairman BERMAN, and a special thanks to Ranking Member ROS-LEHTINEN for all of her efforts and her leadership, for bringing this resolution to the floor. I'd also like to thank my colleague from New York, Congressman TOWNS, for joining me in introducing this resolution. Finally, I also want to thank my chairman, Chairman ENGEL, for his leadership in the hemisphere. It has been a pleasure working with Chairman ENGEL on the important issues facing the Western Hemisphere.

Madam Speaker, the people of El Salvador were hit hard by Hurricane Ida. As a Floridian, I understand how destructive and devastating a hurricane can be. We in Florida know what it's like to see the eye of a hurricane coming our way and how it impacts our lives. My heart goes out to the thousands of men, women, and children who have had their lives completely changed by Hurricane Ida and who are, as we speak, picking up the pieces and slowly rebuilding their destroyed villages.

As the ranking member of the Western Hemisphere Subcommittee, I believe it's important that the people of El Salvador understand that the people of the United States support them during these difficult times. I also think it's important to note how several nations worked together and continue to do so to ensure the people of El Salvador are getting the help they need to rebuild. From Honduras, our forces were able to lift those in need out of harm's way. From south Florida, we were able to airlift much-needed supplies. Those who have participated in these relief efforts should be commended for their help. We are honored by their service.

Madam Speaker, we in Congress remain committed to ensure that the people of El Salvador recover from this disaster, and I urge my colleagues to support this important resolution.

I'd also like to make a quick note, if I could, on an earlier resolution that was brought up, H.R. 2134. And I want to thank, again, Chairman ENGEL for his leadership for introducing the Western Hemisphere Drug Policy Act. The problem of illegal drugs impact people across borders, cultures, and socioeconomic status. When we evaluate the U.S. drug policy in the Americas, we must take an all-encompassing approach to the problem.

This legislation is a positive step towards evaluating U.S. policy. Some have focused on treatment or better education; others have focused on supply and the law enforcement aspect of the problem. But let me be clear, we must make sure that we attack the problem from both angles and all perspectives.

As we continue to address U.S. drug policy in the hemisphere, I know that there will be, as there have been, many obstacles. Some of these include countries that simply refuse to cooperate with the United States. And even worse, Madam Speaker, there are governments that have chosen to be part of or facilitate the flow of drugs into the United States.

According to President Obama, Venezuela has failed during the past year when it comes to counternarcotic efforts. The Obama administration has strong evidence that Venezuela has refused to cooperate on almost all counternarcotic issues. Hugo Chavez' refusal to act responsibly not only hurts Americans, but now Venezuela has the second highest murder rate in the world. The Venezuelan Government's alignment with drug lords is so pervasive that ministers of the Chavez government are now categorized as "Tier II Kingpins." It's pretty clear cut, Madam Speaker, that Chavez and the flow of drugs into the United States is something we cannot ignore.

I want to thank Chairman ENGEL again for his leadership, and urge my colleagues to vote "yes" on the Western Hemisphere Drug Policy Commission Act, H.R. 2134.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of our time.

Mr. ENGEL. Madam Speaker, let me just say very quickly, it's been a pleasure to work with the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MACK), as well as the ranking member of our subcommittee.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New York (Mr. ENGEL) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 213, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the concurrent resolution, as amended, was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

EXPRESSING SYMPATHY TO THE PHILIPPINES

Mr. ENGEL. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 218) expressing sympathy for the 57 civilians who were killed in the southern Philippines on November 23, 2009.

The Clerk read the title of the concurrent resolution.

The text of the concurrent resolution is as follows:

H. CON. RES. 218

Whereas, on November 23, 2009, 57 unarmed civilians were slain in Maguindanao in the worst politically motivated violence in recent Philippine history;

Whereas those killed were on their way to file nomination papers on behalf of Ismael Mangudadatu, vice mayor of Buluan, who intended to run against Andal Ampatuan, Jr. who is currently mayor of Datay Unsu, in

next year's gubernatorial elections to succeed Andal Ampatuan, Sr., the father of Andal Ampatuan, Jr.;

Whereas many of those killed were women and children, including the wife of Vice Mayor Ismael Mangudadatu and his two sisters;

Whereas most of the women were reportedly raped and their bodies were mutilated after being shot;

Whereas as of December 2, 2009, initial charges have been filed in connection with the massacre, according to press reports;

Whereas the Freedom Fund for Filipino Journalists reports that at least 30 journalists and media workers were killed in the Maguindanao massacre;

Whereas, the Committee to Protect Journalists reports that prior to the Maguindanao massacre, 30 journalists had been killed in the Philippines since 2000, and suspects were prosecuted in no more than 4 cases, putting into question the safety of journalists and the integrity of independent journalism in the Philippines;

Whereas government prosecutors and judges with jurisdiction over the massacre have allegedly received threats and have been told to "go slow" on the investigation;

Whereas President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo declared a state of emergency in Maguindanao the day after the massacre, vowing that "no effort will be spared to bring justice to the victims";

Whereas extrajudicial killings and election-related violence are common in the Philippines, though never on this scale and rarely with this level of brutality; and

Whereas the United States and the Philippines share a strong friendship based on shared history and the commitment to democracy and freedom: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That Congress—

(1) regrets the senseless killing of unarmed civilians and expresses its deepest condolences to the families of the 57 victims;

(2) condemns the culture of impunity that continues to exist among clans, politicians, armed elements, and other persons of influence in the Philippines;

(3) calls for a thorough, transparent, and independent investigation and prosecution of those who are responsible for the massacre, including those who committed the killings and anyone who may have ordered them, and that the proceedings be conducted with the highest possible level of professionalism, impartiality, and regard for witness protection to assure the Filipino people that all the responsible persons are brought to justice;

(4) calls for an end to extrajudicial killings and election-related violence;

(5) calls for freedom of press and the safety of the reporters investigating the massacre;

(6) urges the Departments of State and Justice and other United States Government agencies to review their assistance programs to the Government of the Philippines, and to offer any technical assistance, such as forensics support, that Philippine authorities may request; and

(7) reaffirms the United States commitment to working alongside Philippine authorities to combat corruption, terrorism, and security threats.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New York (Mr. ENGEL) and the gentleman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ENGEL. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members